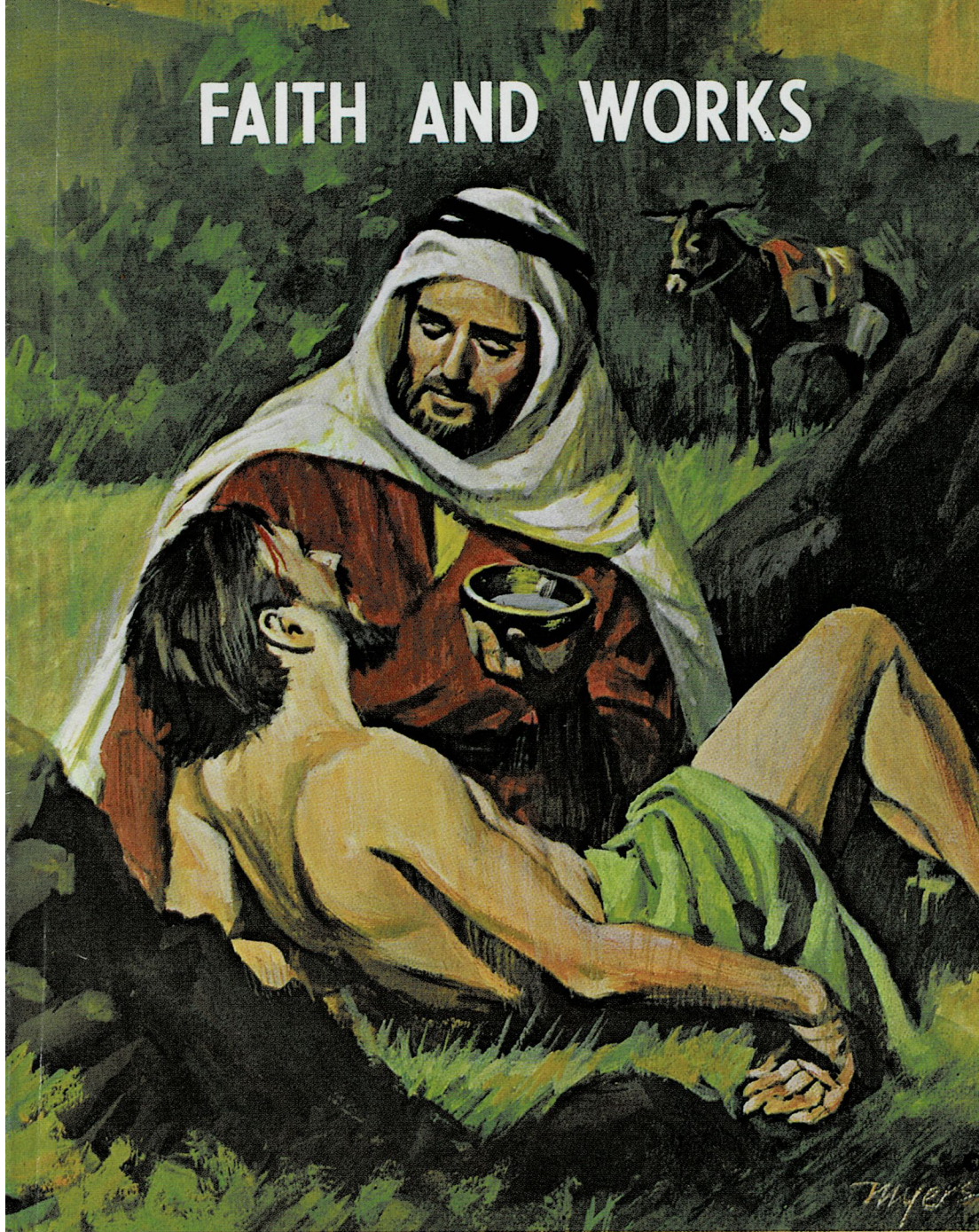


# FAITH AND WORKS



## *LESSON FOUR*

# **BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSE**

*BY JOHN M. HURT*



# The Bridge Builder

An old man going a lone highway  
Came at the evening, cold and gray,  
To a chasm vast and wide and steep,  
With waters rolling cold and deep.  
The old man crossed in the twilight dim,  
The sullen stream had no fears for him;  
But he turned when safe on the other side,  
And built a bridge to span the tide.

"Old man," said a fellow pilgrim near,  
"You are wasting your strength with building here.  
Your journey will end with the ending day,  
And you never again will pass this way.  
You've crossed the chasm, deep and wide,  
Why build you this bridge at eventide?"

The builder lifted his old gray head.  
"Good friend, in the path I have come," he said,  
"There followeth after me today  
A youth whose feet must pass this way.  
The chasm that was as nought to me  
To that fair-haired youth may a pitfall be;  
He, too, must cross in the twilight dim—  
Good friend, I am building this bridge for him."

BY  
WILL  
ALLEN  
DROMGOOLE

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**I**N OUR FIRST THREE LESSONS we have studied God's great love in guiding the Israelites out of Egyptian bondage, in giving them the first great covenant at Mt. Sinai, in allowing Jesus to die for our sins, and in giving us the New Testament under which we now live. Today we shall begin a study of man's "duty" toward God.

When Jesus died on the cross the new covenant came into effect. A few days after this, on the day of Pentecost, a great multitude of the Jews heard Peter preach the first gospel sermon. In it he accused them of brutally murdering God's own Son. The Bible says, "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said to Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:37-38). The Bible further states that about three thousand responded to Peter's words, received the remission of their past sins, and were added to the church. (Acts 2:41 & 47).

There were other Jews however, who also believed on Christ, but did not respond to His teachings in this way. "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." (John 12:42-43). It is obvious from these examples that there is a very definite relationship between acceptable faith and obedience in the New Testament plan. This is the theme of our lesson for today.

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In Ephesians 2:8 Paul said, "For by grace are ye saved through faith . . .". This great truth, although widely accepted, is often misunderstood. In Hebrews 11:6 we read, "But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." Again in Acts 16:31 Paul told the Philippian jailor to "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved . . .".

Jesus said in Mark 16:16, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved . . .".

These and numerous other scriptures clearly show the tremendous importance of faith. Without it there is no hope for a dying world. Few would reason however, that the faith of the wicked rulers who would not confess Christ was as acceptable to God as the faith of the three thousand who obeyed the gospel on the day of Pentecost. The Bible teaches that whether or not our faith is acceptable to God depends upon the state or condition in which it exists.

# FAITH AND WORKS



*We are  
Saved  
Through  
Faith*



The Bible describes two different states or conditions in which faith may exist. In one state faith can and will lead to salvation. In the other it is completely useless and indeed can be a curse instead of a blessing. These two states are as . . .

# STATES OF FAITH

## DEAD FAITH and as LIVING, WORKING FAITH

**I**N JAMES 2:17 the Bible states, "Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." Just as the human body may exist in either the living state or in the dead state, so faith may also be either alive or dead. Living faith, like the living body, is manifest by action. Dead faith, like the dead body, by inactivity. A dead faith merely believes, but does not produce obedience to Christ's law. This was the faith of the "chief rulers" who would not confess Him. The Bible teaches that even the devil has this kind of faith, but that it is of no value whatsoever as far as our salvation is concerned. In James 2:19 the inspired writer, while condemning the false doctrine of salvation by faith apart from the works of obedience to God's Word, said, "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble." Again in verses 14-16 James clearly pointed out that unless our faith is accompanied by the works of obedience it can never be pleasing to God. Finally, in the last verse of chapter two he concludes his great discussion of faith by saying, "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." James thus stated that just as a dead body is useless without the spirit, so dead faith is useless without the works of obedience to Christ's divine law.

We may believe in Christ and even claim to be a Christian, but unless we actively obey His teachings, our faith will be proven to be dead and we shall be forever lost.

**T**HE BIBLE draws a very clear contrast between a dead, useless faith which cannot save, and an active, working faith which is pleasing to God. There is not one single case in all of the Bible of a person ever being saved through dead faith. Paul made this fact doubly clear in Galatians 5:6 when he said that the faith which pleases God is "... faith which *worketh* by love." Every case of Bible conversion shows that people were saved only when their faith was coupled with the works of obedience to God's law. James said, "... shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works." (James 2:18)

This principle is abundantly illustrated in the famous eleventh chapter of Hebrews, (often called "the honor roll of Old Testament characters"). In this great chapter the inspired writer describes numerous cases of people who were saved through faith. In every single case their faith was coupled with obedience. He mentions, for example, such great characters as . . .

1. ABEL:—who by faith offered a more excellent sacrifice. (Worked—verse 4).
2. NOAH:—who by faith built an ark as God directed. (Worked—verse 7). And
3. ABRAHAM:—who by faith left his home and offered his son. (Worked—verses 8 & 17).

If possible, the student should read James 2: and Hebrews 11: as time permits.



## PROMINENT SCRIPTURES CONCERNING

### *Obedience*

**L**ISTED BELOW are a few of the many Bible statements which show that we must not only believe in Christ, but must also obey the requirements of the gospel in order to be saved.

**MATTHEW 7:21**—"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that DOETH the will of my Father which is in heaven."

**ACTS 10:34-35**—" . . . God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, AND WORKETH RIGHTEOUSNESS, is accepted with him."

**2 THESSALONIANS 1:7-8**—" . . . the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, AND THAT OBEY NOT THE GOSPEL of our Lord Jesus Christ."

**JOHN 15:14**—"Ye are my friends, IF YE DO whatsoever I command you."

**1 PETER 1:22**—"Seeing ye have purified your souls IN OBEYING THE TRUTH through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren . . ."

**HEBREWS 5:9**—"And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto ALL THEM THAT OBEY HIM."

**1 JOHN 2:4**—"He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, IS A LIAR, and the truth is not in him."

**ROMANS 6:16**—"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to OBEY, his servants ye are to WHOM YE OBEY; whether of sin unto death, or of OBEDIENCE UNTO RIGHTEOUSNESS?"

**1 JOHN 5:3**—"For this is the love of God, THAT WE KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS: and his commandments are not grievous."

See also 1 Samuel 15:16-24, Ecclesiastes 12:13-14, Matthew 7:24-27.

**WE  
ARE NOT  
SAVED  
BY FAITH  
ONLY**

**I**T IS CLEAR from the scriptures just studied that although we are saved through faith, we cannot possibly be saved by "faith only." Such a doctrine would leave out not only baptism but would exclude the necessity of repentance and love as well. There are many passages which teach that we are saved through faith. The important thing to be remembered, however, is when we are saved through faith. The answer is obvious from the scriptures just given. **WE ARE ONLY SAVED THROUGH FAITH WHEN FAITH HAS PRODUCED THE WORKS OF OBEDIENCE** for "faith if it hath not works is dead" and "the devils believe and tremble." (James 2:17, 19).

The Bible forever condemns any human theory which teaches that we are justified by "faith only" apart from the works of obedience when it plainly states, "Ye see then how that **BY WORKS A MAN IS JUSTIFIED, AND NOT BY FAITH ONLY.**" (James 2:24).



# The Relation of Faith and Works



**J**UST AS there is more than one kind of faith described in the Bible there is also more than one kind of "works." The Bible lists at least four different kinds of works. Three of these are of no value whatever in regard to our salvation, but the fourth is so important that a person cannot be justified without it. (James 2:24). The four may be listed as follows:

- 1. WORKS OF THE FLESH:** These are acts of unrighteousness such as adultery, murder, and drunkenness. They are described and condemned in Galatians 5:19-21.
- 2. OUR OWN WORKS:** These are works practiced by men with the hope of saving themselves by their own power and without God. They include not only idol worship, but all other religious work not bearing God's divine approval. (Acts 7:41; 2 Timothy 1:9).
- 3. WORKS OF THE LAW OF MOSES:** As we studied in lesson Three, the Old Testament law of Moses ended at the death of Christ, therefore we are not under that law today. Paul states, "... by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." (Galatians 2:16).
- 4. WORKS OF OBEDIENCE:** These are simply acts of obedience to the gospel of Christ. Without these works we cannot "enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 7:21; Titus 1:16; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

This explains how Paul could say in Ephesians 2:9 that we are not saved by works, while James says that we are justified by works. (James 2:24). Paul was speaking of our own works (verse 8) while James was referring to the works of obedience. (James 2:14-21). This does not mean, however, that we merit our own salvation. Noah did not earn salvation by building an ark. Joshua did not earn Jericho by marching around it. The Israelites did not earn the promised land simply because they traveled over to it from Egypt. These things, like salvation today, were gifts of God, even though man had to perform works of obedience in order to receive them. Faith then, without obedience, is worthless. For additional references see Luke 6:46-49; Romans 16:26; 1 Peter 4:17-18; Philippians 2:12, and John 1:12.

## LITTLE KNOWN FACTS ABOUT THE BIBLE

The shortest verse in the Bible is John 11:35, containing only two-words. The longest verse is Esther 8:9, containing ninety words.

For convenience of study the Bible was divided into chapters in 1250 A.D. by Hugo.

The New Testament was divided into verses in 1551 by Sir Robert Stephens.

The King James Version of the Bible was first published in 1611 A.D. and continues to be widely used.



**Y**OU MAY be wondering by now why an entire lesson should be devoted to the relation of faith and obedience. The reason is that many people disobey God's Word without actually realizing that they are doing so. The Bible teaches that we may disobey God in three principal ways:

**1. BY DOING WHAT GOD HAS FORBIDDEN:** The obvious way in which we may disobey God is in doing that which He has specifically condemned. Adam and Eve rebelled against God in this way by eating the forbidden fruit. (Genesis 2:17). The same principle holds true in the New Testament. After listing the "works of the flesh" Paul said, "... they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Galatians 5:19-21).

**2. BY FAILING TO DO WHAT GOD HAS COMMANDED:** James said, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (James 4:17). Even if a command of God should seem useless and unnecessary it must be kept if we are to be saved. The Bible says that God does not think as men do. (Isaiah 55:8-9). Many commands which men have rejected as unimportant are of vast importance in the eyes of God or else he would not have given them.

Naaman the leper is a classic example of this type of disobedience. (2 Kings 5:1-4). When he first heard the command of God to dip in the Jordan River seven times in order to cure his leprosy, he refused on the grounds that such a command was not reasonable. He even went away in a rage. Fortunately for Naaman, however, he repented in time, obeyed God's "silly" command, and was cleansed of his infirmity. Truly "... the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." (1 Corinthians 3:19). There have been numerous times in history in which men have chosen to disregard many of Christ's commands. Simply because a religious leader, church, or re-

## *WAYS of DISOBEDIENCE*

ligious council may choose to do so, however, does not make it right in the sight of God.

**3. BY ACTING WITHOUT GOD'S AUTHORITY:** A third method of disobedience lies in taking authority which rightfully belongs only to the Lord. This includes two principle areas: 1. in substituting similar human commands for the commands of God, and 2. in adding commands and practices to the gospel plan for which we have no authority in the scriptures. Jesus spoke of this sin in these words, "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Matthew 15:9). Throughout the ages men have felt it their "right" to add anything to God's Word and worship which he has not specifically condemned. In every age, however, this attitude has been condemned by the Lord. Fifteen centuries before Christ Moses wrote, "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you." (Deuteronomy 4:2). In the New Testament the apostle John said, "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life..." (Revelation 22:18-19).

May we always have the courage to lay aside every human command and practice and to accept only those religious acts and doctrines for which we can find authority in the New Testament.



# Questions

Please answer the following questions and return this last page to be graded.

## LESSON IV

### I. NAME THE PERSON:

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. By faith he offered his son to God.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. He was cured of leprosy when he dipped in the Jordan.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. He said, "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it. . . ."
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. He accused the Jews on the day of Pentecost of murdering Christ.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. He said that teaching the commandments of men for doctrine makes worship vain.

### II. TRUE-FALSE: If the statement is true circle "T," if false, circle "F."

- T F 1. God will save everyone regardless of what they do.
- T F 2. The devils believe and tremble.
- T F 3. Hebrews 11: is sometimes called "The Honor Roll of Old Testament Characters."
- T F 4. The Bible says that we are saved by "faith only."
- T F 5. The Bible describes more than one kind of works.
- T F 6. We are only saved through faith when faith has produced the works of obedience.
- T F 7. We are justified by the works of the law of Moses.
- T F 8. We may disobey God only by doing what he has specifically condemned.
- T F 9. It is right to worship God in ways he has not commanded.
- T F 10. Naaman was cleansed as soon as he believed and before he dipped in the Jordan River.

### III. FILL IN THE BLANKS:

1. "He that \_\_\_\_\_ and is \_\_\_\_\_ shall be saved." (Mark 16:16).
2. "Faith, if it hath not \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_." (James 2:17).
3. "Ye see then how that by \_\_\_\_\_ a man is justified and not by \_\_\_\_\_ only." (James 2:24).
4. "... the \_\_\_\_\_ also believe and tremble." (James 2:19).
5. "His \_\_\_\_\_ ye are to whom ye \_\_\_\_\_." (Romans 6:16).

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